1: Hoebel E-5 (1933) 1940 NO6 Comanche NO6

lar formula formed separate societies. Possibly there were others, but they were not discovered by us. The members of a society carried shields each painted with an identical pattern and all followed the same medicine prescription and possessed the power in common.

The membership of a society was limited—in one case to six, in another to twelve members. Perhaps it was felt that the inclusion of more persons diffused the power so as to weaken its efficiency, or perhaps the six and double-six had peculiar meaning; no society numbered more than that.

As special interest groups we must suspect that they had their ways of exerting social pressure. But in a culture which is now so much a thing of the past, the medicine societies being limited in size and apparently having no governmental import, they have left no clue as to what subversive or other means they might have evoked to satisfy their own particular personal, group, or political ambitions.

THE SMOKE LODGE OR OLD MEN'S SOCIETY

Old men who no longer went on the warpath had a special tipi wherein they foregathered at the ending of the day to smoke and talk small talk. This was the Smoke Lodge. It was thoroughly a men's club, an old men's club; no boys or women were allowed to enter. Initiatory rites were not held for new members; when one became old and venerable enough to be satisfied with mellow, reminiscent talk, he just started going to the meetings and was free to come and go as he wished. We have no record of invitation or of rebuff to a new arrival.

When the band was stopping for only a short time at a camp site, the old men did not raise their tipi but were content with simply pressing down a circular spot in the weeds apart from the camp for their Smoke Circle. When the village was more permanently located, if the camp plan was in the crescent form, the Smoke Lodge was raised near the middle; if the tipis were laid out in a row, the Smoke Lodge was said to have been set up to the south and east of the line.

Though the group was informally organized, each evening's session was opened with a ritual. The lodge possessed a large common pipe which was in the care of its leader.[8] While the lighting of the pipe was in process, there was tabu on spoken words. Absolute silence prevailed. Next to the tipi door, to the right as one entered, sat the fire-tender, a captive Mexican. Opposite the door, in the usual place of a head-man, was the lodge leader with the

[8] We were unable to determine how the leader obtained his pipe, whether it was a special pipe which gave with it the leadership, or whether the leader emerged in the manner of peace chiefs and supplied his personal pipe for the usage.

1: Hoebel E-5 (1933) 1940 NO6 Comanche NO6

pipe. When the time for smoking had arrived, the leader ordered the fire built up. In the light of its blaze he filled the pipe. The next step was invocation. Holding the pipe to the sky, offering was made to the Sun. This done, a pinch of tobacco was taken from the bowl and laid upon the ground—an offering to the Earth. If at any stage of this process the silence was broken, it was necessary to make a fresh start by dumping all the tobacco from the pipe out on the ground and starting anew. Informants did not know of any consequences being visited upon the breaker of the tabu. When finally the pipe was prepared, the fire-tender crossed directly over to the leader and tendered a live coal. With the issuance of smoke the ceremony was done and the old men could lapse into their round of conversation. The pipe was passed among them and carefully smoked until it was burned out. Then after a bit, the refilling and lighting ceremony was again solemnly performed and they were ready for another round of talk. Four times they filled and smoked the pipe out; then they broke up for the night. The fire-tender made first exit through the door. The others followed after in procession, all treading around the tipi to the north. But during the course of the evening a man could make non-ceremonial exit from either side of the door.

The talk turned on matters both amusing and serious; the old men were eclectic in their interests. On occasion they made an amusing turn on such coup-counting bouts as Grinnell reports for the Cheyenne.

> . . . the two bands were ranged on opposite sides of the lodge, facing each other . . . When all were ready to begin, he (the umpire) passed a counter to the man sitting at one end of the line. The counter passed from hand to hand until it reached one who had done this thing, when he narrated the circumstances, perhaps mentioning the name of some witness to the deed. . . .
>
> . . . When the coup had been related, the stick which had been passed for it was returned to the umpire, who thrust it in the ground with his right or left hand, according as the winning was by the party to his right or left. . . . Whichever side had the most sticks received a feast the next day from the losing side.[1]

The old Comanches, too, held meetings to decide supremacy among them. A handful of straws served for tally. Straw by straw, the old stags put in the evening asking each other questions of dishonorable or evil-scented nature. "How many times have you been divorced?" "How many times did you turn back from the war path without meeting the enemy?" was another favorite. Or, "How many times did you take a woman on a war party?" And so on into the night. This interesting game is unquestionably a travesty on coup-counting bouts of the Plains Warrior Societies. The

[1] Grinnell, *The Cheyenne Indians*, vol. 1, pp. 78–79.

1: Hoebel E-5 (1933) 1940 NO6 Comanche NO6

to Coyote was to be held up alongside of that sly, ridiculous, untrustworthy mountebank who is the *Til Eulenspiegel* of Comanche mythology. The boy took it hard, too. He sulked in his lodge, ashamed to go out and face his friends. He thought his chance to save his face had come when an alarm of the approach of white military ran through the camp. He prepared to die gloriously, but was doomed to disappointment when the whites held out the olive branch.

627 x 684 558

CONDITIONAL CURSE

The rough-and-ready third degree techniques fit well into the Comanche picture of war-like life. But beyond these forms there were other means at hand for the husband who chose to use them. These were ritualistic approaches to the supernatural which entered when called upon as a legal force. The supernatural was invoked through conditional curse and oath.

627 x 782 ●

The use of the conditional curse for proof was very specialized, indeed confined seemingly to adultery and sorcery cases. It was known as "sun-killing" taβéβeka$\imath$. In adultery procedure the husband took his wife to a lonely spot and making smoke with his pipe, he addressed the charge to the sun and the earth and sometimes the moon. By these same powers the wife swore her innocence. These powers in their omnipotence knew the truth, and if the wife were guilty, they afflicted her with consumption. The usual fate of erring women who took the curse was, according to native dogma, that of Short Dress, wife of Kóhi. She denied her husband's charge, placing her hands flat upon the earth and calling upon the powers, while her husband smoked. She bade the sun, "May I die when the geese fly from the south to the north if I have done the thing he has charged me with."[8] She died the next spring.

In adultery, as in sorcery, the supernatural played the double role of judge and executor. The case was rested by the prosecutor and there was no more for him to do but await results.

More recent developments put another angle on the conditional curse. As Comanche women began to feel the emancipating effects of the impact of white contact, they refused to submit docilely to the curse. It was very unsettling to the men, but even so, That's It laughed as he thought of the startled discomfiture of the first husband to feel its effects. This man had accused his wife of adultery and did not believe her denial, so he prepared a smoke to the sun. And just as he was about to pronounce the fatal words, his wife broke in.

627 x 177 562

"You are going to make smoke. You want to kill me," she expostulated.

[8] Some Comanches evaded repeating this oath to us for fear of its dangerous implications.

6: Linton E-5 (1933) 1935 NO6 Comanche NO6

time. Each time they shrugged and stamped they blew a short blast on the eagle bone whistle. When certain special songs were sung all the spectators would join in, rise and dance too to encourage them. The medicine man stayed behind the screen most of the time, but when the dancers seemed to be flagging he would come out and reinvigorate them. He would do this by taking his fan, made of the tail feathers of the road-runner, and, while holding it horizontal, sweep it around in a circle from left to right. As he swept it around he blew along it and each dancer, as it came in line with him, began to dance hard again.

From time to time, apparently whenever interest was flagging, one of the spectators would come forward and hang a gift of some sort on the center pole. While doing so he would pray for a long and happy life. Small boys were encouraged to shoot arrows into the fork of the pole as their offerings. These offerings were sacred and could not be touched. When the people went away at the end of the dance the things were simply left there to be destroyed by the elements. However, visitors from other tribes who happened to be present during the dance could put an offering on the pole and take down something else in exchange. One informant, when a small boy, had visited a Kiowa Sun Dance lodge after the dance and had, on the advice of his grandfather, exchanged his old breech clout for a new one hanging on the pole. When they got back to camp their own people said that this was dishonest.

According to Post Oak Jim, the informant mentioned above, the medicine man in charge might come out from time to time and do sleight of hand tricks to show his power. He might put a knife down his throat and bring it up covered with blood. Then he would blow on the blade and the blood would disappear. Sick people might also call on the medicine man for special help during the dance, although whether he treated them on the spot was not ascertained. No other informants mentioned these features, but healing is such a frequent element in Comanche ceremonies that they may well have taken it for granted. All the spectators were believed to benefit by the ceremony and to go away improved in health and spirits.

On the first day the dance ran from early in the afternoon until sunset. There was then a halt of about two hours to rest and eat, after which the dance began again and continued until midnight. After the evening session had ended, the dancers went down to the creek under guard of a man chosen by the medicine man and bathed. They sat and splashed in the water but were forbidden to dive in or to drink. They then returned and slept behind the screen on the beds prepared for them. They danced the next morning, afternoon, and evening, with intervals at noon and night for them to rest

7: Richardson D-4 (no date) 1929
NO6 Comanche NO6

411 steel, about two feet and a half long and an inch wide, tapering to a point, fixed into a slender handle of bois d'arc, the whole weapon being about seven feet in length.

714 The Comanche shields were described as being circular in form,
411 about two feet in diameter, and made of wicker work covered with two thicknesses of Buffalo hide. Between the coverings of buffalo hide was a padding of hair about an inch thick. With the advent of the rifle the Indians probably reinforced their shields. At any rate the tough buffalo hide covering, turned flesh side out and polished as much as possible, would turn a rifle ball unless it struck it perpendicular to the surface.

411 Long after they had become acquainted with metal implements the Comanches continued to use a war club made by binding a withe around a hard stone of about two pounds in weight. A groove around the stone helped to keep it in place. The handle was about fourteen inches long. No doubt the Indians often put this stone to various uses such as driving stakes.

771 Very little is known about the religion of the wild Comanches.
776 Their religious conceptions were evidently vague and they had comparatively few well established customs of religious meaning. One observer credits them with acknowledging a supreme ruler and director, whom they called the great spirit, and with worshipping the sun as the great cause of life and the earth as the receptacle and producer of all that sustains life.[23] It may well be doubted that they had any conception of a single "Great Spirit," but their veneration for the sun and earth can not be doubted. When game was brought down on a hunt the carcass was immediately prepared and cooked, but no matter how hungry the Indian might be, not a
[782] bite was eaten until the chief or leader had cut off a morsel and buried it. Similarly when the chief lit his pipe the first puff of smoke was blown toward the sun and the second to the earth.[24]

784 Naturally these savages had many taboos. One or two of these may be mentioned as illustrative, for they were sometimes matters of great consequence. In 1787, the Spanish in New Mexico tried a colonization experiment with the Comanches and spent a consider-

23. Parker, Notes Taken with Marcy, 231.
24. See Noah Smithwick, The Evolution of a State, 180. Ceremonies preceding the meal similar to this were common among the plains tribes. See Hodge, I, 455.

23: Cabello y Robles G-3 (1778-1786) 1961
NO6 Comanche NO6
Eastern Comanche

(ca. 1786)

175 nor of Texas a number of questions about this tribe. A
128 translation of Governor's Cabello's reply follows:

175 Domingo Cabello: "Answers that the Governor of the Province of Texas Gave to the Questions that the Señor Commandant-General of the Interior [Provinces] asked in a letter dated January 27, 1786, about various circumstances of the Eastern Comanche Indians," April 30, 1786, Bexar Archives.

FIRST: About Their Customs.

175 According to what is known about this Nation, it is the
181 most brave and warlike of those [tribes] that inhabit the North; and when they have friendship they are very friendly and of a generous mood, and friends of their friends, although delicate in the mode with which they make friendship.
175 They adore very much the skins of animals which they
778 customarily bring with them, and which they fasten on
825 themselves during the encounters of war, so that they will not be killed or wounded in any manner; and if any mis-
726 fortune befall them, they attribute it to having given some
782 offense to this specie of idol, such as not having offered it
784 food or the smoke (*humo*) of tobacco each time they smoke (*juman*), or that women have defiled the ceremonies which they make use of when they take the pipe in hand. Some devote themselves in this manner to adoring a buffalo hide, others to that of the bear, others to the otter, and others to that of some birds, whose skin, still with its feathers, they
175 use to adorn themselves. Their marriages they celebrate
595 with as many women as they are able to maintain; if someone
462 distinguishes himself in bravery and in actions made against his enemies, or something of a similar nature, some fathers give him even of their daughters, and it is the custom many times for him to marry with the sisters [of his wife]; husbands maintain their women with the buffalo and deer which they hunt; [the women] are obliged to work the meat and [prepare] the hides of the said animals.
175 [The husbands] are so extremely jealous that for very trif-
593 ling motives they kill their women; furthermore, when these mild ones give occasion for it, the husbands treat them with much blindness and harshness, as if they were slaves.

29: Hoebel E-4,5 (1933) 1969 N06 Comanche N06

to several violent privilege-rights. A married woman could be wholly at the mercy of her husband's whim. He was free to extort from her a confession, as well as the name of her lover, by use of the cruelest third-degree methods. He either choked her until she gasped out the required information, or he took her out to a spot some distance from the camp where he built a fire over which he slowly lowered his terrorized wife until she gave him the information he wanted.

More refined men put the matter in the hands of the Sun and Earth. They took their wives to a lonely spot for *taβ βekat*, "sun killing." The suspecting husband filled his ceremonial pipe and smoked to the great powers, addressing first the sun. "You, Father, know the truth of this matter. As you look down upon them don't let them live until fall." Then to the Earth he said, "You, Mother Earth, as you know what is true, don't let them live a happy life on you."

Thereupon the wife smoked the pipe and avowed her innocence with an appeal to the Sun and Earth to kill her if she lied. Comanche dogma has it, and supporting cases are offered, that when women made this ritual conditioned curse, the Sun knew if they were guilty, and it killed them. Its penalty for perjury was death.[6]

Women, for their part, had no demand-rights against their husbands that they be faithful in marriage; they could exact no penalties from them. Hence, they had no opportunities to put their husbands to the test. But in recent decades some did turn the tables by demanding of the Sun and Earth, when they took the oath, that the powers kill the husband if the wife were innocent of the act.

Finally, it should be noted that when the issue was put to the Sun and Earth, no legal action against the corespondent followed. The death of the wife ended the matter.

On the other hand, the collecting of damages from the offending male did not necessarily absolve the wife. If her absconder was strong enough, she had a good chance of escaping her husband's ire. But she ran terrible risks. In seven of forty-five Comanche adultery and wife-absconding cases the women were slain by their husbands—one in seven! Three of these were adulteresses; four were absconders. Of the twenty other adulteresses five were mutilated by their husbands; four had their noses cut off, and one had the soles of her feet slashed so she could not walk.

One may wonder that any Comanche woman played the game against such odds. We see it as additional evidence that mere severity of the law is not enough by itself to make people behave.

The Comanche law of murder was most simple. For a Comanche husband to kill his wife—with or without good cause—was not murder.

[6] Hoebel, *Political Organization and Law-ways*, pp. 90–91.

31: Jones E-5 (1967-1970) 1972 NO6 Comanche NO6
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to which her mother had sent her, and at dusk she would creep back to her house and pass the night under the front porch. In the morning she would go back to the hill before the household had awakened. Her mother and uncle never knew about this deception. However, Sanapia believes that the great amount of sickness and misfortune experienced as a young woman can be attributed to her cowardly conduct during this last phase of her training.

> Before, you have to go and fast four days, before they give you that Medicine. Maybe take a little water. You suppose to go up there on that hill and sleep up there by yourself. You suppose to pray and cry and talk. My mother say, "Somebody will come to you way in the night . . . in the middle of the night. They going to push you and kick you and they do things like that, but don't get scared. They going to kick you around and slap you. They fighting you for your Medicine." That's what they told me. But me, I was afraid to sleep up there in them mountains by myself. I didn't want to go out. I go up there and come back. Nobody come to me . . . or nothing.

Before appearing at her home on the morning of the fifth day, Sanapia bathed in a running stream as a device to erase any vestiges of supernatural residue which could be harmful to those who would greet her on her return. The mother met Sanapia as she approached the house and blessed her with the standard cedaring, fanning, and application of red paint. It was also during this blessing that the mother first addressed her daughter as *puhakut*.

Close friends of Sanapia's family had gathered at the house to congratulate Sanapia and to present her with gifts. The host family in turn gave gifts to those who came to honor Sanapia. Moccasins, blankets, shawls, groceries, money, dishes, yard goods, and horses were the items which were exchanged as gifts.

Within a few days after Sanapia returned from her four-day fasting, her family sponsored a peyote meeting. The main function of this particular meeting was to gather a large group of Comanches for the purpose of formally announcing Sanapia's newly acquired status. Also, it was thought that the prayers which would be offered for her during the meeting would aid her to more easily bear the burdens which her power imposed. The morning after the meeting was festive, consisting of more gift giving and feasting. However, at the same time that the beginning of Sanapia's new career was being celebrated, her mother's doctoring career had ended. The mother, though retaining all her powers, would cease to function as a doctor. Her withdrawal, however, was voluntary. If she had so desired, she could have continued her doctoring activities. This type of behavior would have been considered improper on the part of the mother, even though Sanapia would not be able to doctor until many years in the future, after menopause. Sanapia, basing her actions on those of her mother, will also cease doctoring once she has transmitted her skills and powers to her successor. In the nomadic Comanche culture, power could be transmitted from donor to recipient with no loss on the part of the donor. This is the case with the transmission of power from the mother to Sanapia.

In Sanapia's accounts of her mother's temper during the time of transmission of power, it would seem that the mother, who had reached a very advanced

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fanning passes over the front and back of the body from the waist down. Sanapia prays that her patient may live a long, healthy life as she fans him and that all evil will be blown away from the patient by the motion of the feather. She explains that she has the power of the eagle; and when she touches a person with her Medicine feather, it is as if the eagle were touching them, instilling in them some of its Medicine. Her feather carries with it the tabus associated with her other medicine articles. However, a specific emphasis was placed by her mother on the prohibition of taking the Medicine feather into a room or area in which there is a large group of people.

> That eagle got some kind of power that I use for Medicine. I got one eagle feather, and it is really powerful, that thing. And I believe it. I done many works with that feather. I believe it.

Indian Lard

"Indian lard" is the name Sanapia applies to tallow or rendered beef fat. She uses it as a general purpose salve, though she states that it is especially efficacious in the treatment of severe burns. Also, it is her only remedy for constipation. Two or three tablespoonsful of lukewarm liquified tallow are administered to a patient with constipation.

Mouth Wash

The majority of cases which Sanapia treats involve the sucking operation. When the sucking is completed, Sanapia requires something to kill the "poison" and the disagreeable taste which is left in her mouth. Her mother used kerosene; however, Sanapia prefers a commercial brand of mouth wash and carries a small bottle of it in her medicine kit.

Red Paint

The red paint used by Sanapia is obtained by grinding and powdering a dark red clay which she finds west of Geary, Oklahoma. The paint is reconstituted by mixing it with water or tallow.

The paint is ever present in all of her blessing ceremonies. She also uses this paint at the termination of her treatment of ghost sickness. On the last day of treatment, she paints the patient's face, lower arms, and lower legs. The patient is instructed to wear the paint for two days before washing it off.

Sanapia states that painting is a prayer to the earth. The red paint is obtained from the earth and is the color of the earth. When she applies it to her patient she is asking the earth to care for him.

> The earth . . . talk to it like a mother. They call it that. Say "Watch this man, or woman, or child. They walking on you, same color as you, they you child. You can see that. Watch out for them during the long time they got to be on you."

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278 824 755 757 A decoction of the thick white root is externally administered in the treatment of ghost sickness, bruises, bone breaks, and menstrual cramps. A paste made from the root is used to coat the finger during the treatment of "poking the throat." This procedure is usually initiated in the case of children with diphtheria or other conditions which are acting to close the throat passage. Sanapia applies the paste to her index finger and lightly probes the child's throat to the extent of her finger's reach. This same paste is used as a liniment in all cases of severe stomach pains. In addition, Sanapia spews from her mouth a very dilute decoction of this medicine on patients suffering from ghost sickness.

There is more ritual activity involved with the collection of *bekwinatsu* [782] than with any other plant medicine which Sanapia utilizes. Upon approaching the area in which the plant will be collected, Sanapia recites a short prayer.

> Well, I tell it that I'm coming to take it way with me. I say that I need you help peoples that got twisted face . . . what them ghosts do to peoples, you know. Then I tell it that I'm going to give it something in return. I supposed to put a piece of green goods over its branche before I dig it out. Sometimes I do and sometimes I don't. Sometimes I'm in a hurry so I don't do that, but that's what I'm supposed to do, that's what my uncle told me to do.

When she approaches the plant, she situates herself to the west of the plant and drapes a small strip of dark green cloth over the spindly branches. She then digs the plant from the ground, detaches the long root, and deposits the remainder of the plant over the hole from which it was extracted with the strip of green cloth attached to one of the branches.

tanawiba

[137] "yellow flowers"; "makes knife sticky" (broomweed) *Guitierrezia dracunculoides*

Sanapia uses this plant medicine for the treatment of exzema and rashes when prepared as she describes.

> Get the tops . . . the flowers . . . and boil them into a jelly. Now, when anybody got excema, you just wrap it on . . . put it on a rag and wrap it on there. Use the tops . . . just tops. Boil them good and when they cool down, they get just like jelly. That jelly is what you use for medicine.

kusiwɔna

"it's gray" [No specimen]

This is one of Sanapia's major medicines. It is used as an addition to many medicinal preparations to increase their potency. An infusion made from the root is also used as a sedative in the absence of peyote or concomitantly with peyote. It is specifically used, however, in the treatment of "fits" (epilepsy?) and as the main medicine employed in the treatment of witch victims.

When used to treat fits, the splintered root is boiled to a tea, and the

31: Jones E-5 (1967-1970) 1972 NO6 Comanche NO6
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which has been presented and the material still to be presented that Sanapia is very aware of the psychological factor in illness and the necessity of treating psychological as well as physiological symptoms in a patient.

Treatment of Ghost Sickness

Immediately after this first interview, Sanapia instructs the patient to bathe in the stream which flows west of her house and to change his clothes. The actual treatment will begin after sunrise on the day following the first interview. Between this time and the time of the initiation of treatment, the patient is treated as a guest of Sanapia's household. During this time Sanapia sharpens her first diagnosis by a more thorough examination of the patient. Continual bathing is the only activity which is required of the patient. Since Sanapia will have to apply her mouth to the patient in her doctoring, she instructs him to wash often so he will be as clean as possible when Sanapia begins treatment. The notion of the magical effect of water is also probably present, though Sanapia never directly alluded to this.

Sanapia will doctor her patient three times daily for a period of two days. The treatment will be given at sunrise, midday, and sunset. By the morning of the third day the patient should be cured. Sanapia then blesses him, and the patient is dismissed. If, by the morning of the third day, the patient is not well, Sanapia continues her doctoring through another series of six treatments. After four days if the patient shows no sign of improvement, Sanapia will concede that she has failed in her attempts to cure her patient and will suggest either that he go to the white doctors in Lawton to obtain any comfort which they can supply or that he resign himself to his impending death. However, Sanapia states that even if she knows that her patient is going to die, she will usually not tell him because, as she says, "I can't stand to look at them when I have to say that to them. It makes me feel just so bad that I can't do it." Sanapia's ability to foretell the death of a patient is not solely based on her developed skills at prognosticating from the individual's physical condition. She states that she hears a voice which tells her that absolutely nothing can be done to save her patient.

> I hear, "He's dead right now, he's dead right now." And I know they going to die. I know that part too. They would get up and sit up and talk and walk. Well, they eat their food and drink water and they feel good. But I know that's the last meal they going to have. That's the last drink they going to have.

Before sunrise on the day that she will begin treatment and before she awakens her patient, Sanapia selects and prepares the medicines she will use. She then ties them in a cloth bundle, for she will take them with her when she, accompanied by her patient, goes to make her prayers with the rising sun. She then awakens her patient, prepares his breakfast, and takes him to a secluded place on a small knoll south of her house. It is still dark when they walk to the selected place of prayer. Sanapia sits facing east with her patient beside her. She

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775 then unwraps her medicines and exposes them on the cloth in which they were
755 wrapped.
756 Both Sanapia and her patient smoke Bull Durham tobacco wrapped in corn
782 shucks as they wait for the sun to rise. Sanapia prays to the earth immediately
[276] before sunrise, and when the sun appears she directs her prayers to it.

> In the morning, before the sun come up, you go out away from the house, where nobody can hear you and you pray. You touch the ground with your hands, four times, and say . . . I don't know where it came from, but you say, "Mother earth, I want you to take my words. I want you to do what I want. I'm walking over you. I live on you, and I love you because you're my land." Say things like that to it. That sun not up yet. But it's the big eagle . . . talk to it like it's eagle . . . think of it like that, you know. It's going to fly up pretty soon when the sun comes up, and that's the eagle going to do everything I want.

776 The sun and the earth were the two greatest sources of power in the
821 nomadic Comanche culture. Wallace and Hoebel (1952:190) write that ". . . only
823 the sun, moon, and earth were looked upon as semi-dieties." They were also personified and addressed in prayer. The earth was considered second only to the sun in supernatural importance by the Comanches; however, though they were active in the affairs of men, neither the sun nor the earth gave personal power (Wallace and Hoebel 1952:195–197). Also in the content of the pages just cited are numerous mentions of the earth being addressed as "mother" by the Comanches. Kardiner (1945:63), when discussing Comanche beliefs associated with magic and power, writes: "The greatest powers were the earth, and the sun, with which the eagle was felt to be associated."

775 When the sun appears over the horizon, Sanapia begins her prayers in
755 which she will ask "the eagle" to aid her in healing her patient. The patient,
756 seated beside her, is instructed to pray for his recovery and to put his faith and
782 trust in the powers of the earth and sun. She also indicates her medicines, exposed to the sun, and asks that it will fill them with power.

[372] This period of prayer, first to the earth and then to the rising sun, lasts about half an hour, or until the sun has completely cleared the horizon. Sanapia then takes her patient back to her house, where her hubsnd or son have already prepared the pecan wood coals which Sanapia will need when she begins to doctor.
[824] Pecan coals are desired because they form long-burning, even coals. At this time
237 she will attach her crow feather amulet to a beam on her front porch. She some-
[778] times affixes several crow feathers to her patient's wrist.

775 As mentioned previously, in doctoring, Sanapia is alone with her patient.
755 If she is in a tent or tepee, she sits on the south side of the tent, which is custom-
756 arily facing east, and positions her patient directly in front of her. He lies on his
[823] back with his head toward the west. The medicines she will use are placed to her right, and the pecan coals are placed in an iron kettle or shovel so their position can be changed as Sanapia doctors. When she is in a house, she attempts to duplicate these conditions as closely as possible.

After her patient is situated, Sanapia begins her attempt to mobilize her

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various power sources for the task at hand. She deposits some cedar on the coals 775
and smokes her Medicine feather by lightly waving it through the rising smoke 755
four times. She then lays her feather on the fragment of Mexican sarape, which 756
also underlies the medicines she will use, and holds her hands in the medicine smoke. With a washing motion, she draws the smoke over her face, arms, chest, and legs. After she "cleanses" herself with the smoke, she takes her feather and ceremonially fans her patient.

She then takes her Bible between her palms and, extending her arms before 775
her, she prays to "God and Jesus and especially the Holy Ghost" to assist her 755
in healing her patient. If she is inspired to do so, she will sometimes open her 756
Bible at random and read from it in an attempt to receive a sign from "God, 779
Jesus, or the Holy Ghost" concerning the direction she should take in her doc- 782
toring, or the possible outcome of her treatment.

Next, Sanapia picks up her Chief Peyote, and holding it in her right 775
hand, she speaks to it. As mentioned in the chapter on medicines, Sanapia 755
will usually threaten the peyote rather than beseech it or pray to it when she 756
uses it in doctoring. As she talks to it, she will transfer it from hand to hand in 278
order to draw the power it possesses into her hands.

After Sanapia has made her opening prayers, she is in a very agitated 775
emotional condition. This is mentioned both by Sanapia and by some of her 755
expatients. She considers the chills, shaking, and trembling that she experiences 756
as signs that her power has entered her, and she will not begin to doctor until 152
she reaches this state.

> And when I pray like that . . . well, that power just come over me, comes down and gives me that chills and I start shaking all at once and pretty soon it goes away and then I start. Sometimes I can't hardly touch them, the way my hand be shaking. It makes me feel like that power wants to make me get them well right now.

When she has regained control of her hands after the siege of trembling, 775
Sanapia begins the treatment proper. She takes a segment of the white root of 755
bekwinatsu and masticates it to a moist pulp. She then spews it over the patient's 756
face, head, and arms if they have been affected by the ghost contagion. She also takes this moist pulp, and, after rolling it between her palms, she rubs it over the areas of the patient's body which exhibit symptoms of ghost sickness. After so doing, she deposits this premasticated root in the patient's mouth and instructs him to to swallow it.

Sanapia then chews another piece of *bekwinatsu* together with a few leaves of sweet sage to sweeten her mouth and, retaining this concoction in her mouth, applies her mouth to the contorted areas of the patient's face to suck out the sickness. Although she has the option of utilizing her sucking horn in other cases, she is obliged to use her mouth in the doctoring of ghost sickness.

Her mouth and hands are the areas of her body which are believed to be especially charged with power. This is the rationale for the spewing of medicines on a patient, the administering of medicines which have been premasticated by

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finally stand before her, looking entirely natural and lifelike, much as they looked during Sanapia's adolescence. Sanapia continues her singing as they stand silently before her. In her song she tells them that she is alone and helpless and that she has no one to whom she can turn for help but them. She reminds them of their pledge of aid whenever she might need it during her lifetime. Sanapia may have to repeat her song for several hours as the spirits stand gazing down at her. Finally, with gestures of the hands they indicate that Sanapia will have what she wishes.

This means that the spirits of her mother and uncle have interceded with the Medicine eagle on her behalf. If the Medicine eagle is going to appear to Sanapia, it is at this time that he makes his appearance. Sanapia does not move after the spirits of her mother and uncle have left her. She ceases her Medicine song, but she remains to pray for a while longer before returning to her patient. Sanapia also must rest while her heart and breathing recover normalcy after the agitation they experienced during the apparition of the spirits.

She describes the appearance of the Medicine eagle in the following account:

> I was so tired then and I was crying too. Sitting there and seeing my mother like that. All at once I felt cold wind pushing me down. It was on my head and all around . . . flatten down the grass around me and I had to lean on my hands because it was heavy like I thought it might push me down right over my face. My blanket was blowing off me and I was grabbing for it . . . blowing my hair all over. Got scared and started shaking. Boy! that wind blow dust in my eyes and I was rubbing them when all at once everything got calm . . . like a dream like when you be sleeping way in the night. I saw that eagle . . . big, big, like an eagle . . . shining so pretty on its feathers. And I guess I was being silly because I start crying some more . . . just like some old woman. But I hear it in my mind, you know, say, "Go ahead, get him well. You can do it." Then I don't see nothing . . . I guess it's gone then.

Sanapia returns to her patient and attempts to utilize her newly acquired power increase to cure him. She uses only her Medicine feather and medicine smoke at this point. Most of her energy is aimed at instilling in her patient, through her prayers and contact with her feather, enough power to negate the malevolent forces which are acting to keep the patient from recovering. She does not come in physical contact with the patient at this time, for she feels that such contact would kill him.

If her patient has recovered during the night, she takes him outside with her before sunrise to make her morning prayers. She then blesses him in the standard manner and instructs him to wear the red paint for two days before he washes it off. This blessing on the morning of the third day after the initiation of doctoring marks the end of treatment.

Payments

The final payment is made within the succeeding weeks. Sanapia does not state a price but must accept whatever is offered her. She has received from

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become jealous of the children of other women and to punish the younger women attempt to kill their children. 754 756 [828]

Sanapia feels that the incidents of witchcraft are very rare and are occurring less frequently as the older people of the tribe pass away. In her career as a doctor, a period spanning approximately thirty years, Sanapia reports only six cases of which she has had personal knowledge, though she points out that when she was younger, there were more doctors who could be approached for aid by a witchcraft victim.

The last case of this kind which Sanapia treated occurred two months after I had established rapport with her. It was the first case of witchcraft which she had doctored in four years. This was fortunate for the purposes of my investigation, for Sanapia's full attention was on the subject, and I was also able to obtain an account of the manner in which she doctored her niece's child, the victim of the witch. Before proceeding with a description of the doctoring of a witched individual, I would like to discuss a method of witchcraft known by Sanapia.

A Method of Witchcraft

When a *puhakut* has decided to witch someone, he first spends four days fasting and praying that what he is about to wish will come to pass. These four days are not as rigorously observed as the four days of "vision quest." Fasting is not total, and though he should be outside during the day where he has privacy, he is free to return to his home at night. When he goes to pray, the *puhakut* is only allowed to take water and Bull Durham tobacco and corn shucks for rolling cigarettes. He must also be at his chosen place of prayer before sunrise to make his morning prayers to the sun. This is the first of many elements in this method of witchcraft which strongly suggests that it was or is the method of the eagle doctors. Sanapia, of course, denies this. 754 756 785 [782]

After the period of preparation, the *puhakut* laces a short length of buckskin through his flesh and ties it in a knot, thus forming a loose loop about an inch in diameter which is attached to the flesh. This piece of buckskin can be placed anywhere on the body, though Sanapia states that it is usually visible. She is not unaware of the psychological affect such a display can have.

> Maybe someone sees him like that . . . with that buckskin, they might get scared and stop doing what's making him mad. That's what I think. I ask some old man that had that when I was little what he was doing and he didn't say nothing to me. My grandmother get after me for talking to him and she told me about that part. Later I heard of it around here.

The time between the first stage of the act of witchcraft and the execution of the final stages is indeterminate in length. Perhaps, as Sanapia suggests, if the display of the buckskin loop frightens the potential victim enough, the actions which are aggravating the *puhakut* may cease, and the final stage of the witching need not occur. During this time the wearer of the buckskin loop tells no one

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the imitative and sympathetic mystical rapport an eagle doctor possess with his supernatural patron, the eagle; and it suggests that possibly this method of witchcraft is, or was, in the form of a special Medicine solely possessed by doctors with eagle power and that doctors who possessed a different supernatural patron would also possess different method of witchcraft. The emphasis on prayers to the sun is also relevant.

The Symptoms of Witch Sickness

Sanapia feels that the symptoms exhibited by an individual who has been witched are unmistakable. Such a person feels tired and listless and is unable to retain food. He wants to sleep continually and usually suffers from fever. The unique symptom of witchcraft, according to Sanapia, is excessive perspiration on the top of the victim's head, perspiration which the victim cannot feel and which can be felt only by a doctor possessing the proper Medicine. She believes that this localized fever is caused by "foamy stuff" which accumulates under the skin surface at the top of the head. The foamy stuff is, in turn, caused by the magically toxic witch's feather. Also occurring are symptoms which are very similar to the unilateral facial paralysis which appears with ghost sickness. In the case of witchcraft, however, the victim's eyes do not water, he does not salivate excessively, and the contortions of the face, hands, and arms occur in spasmodic fashion rather than the constant state of paralysis found with ghost sickness. In both cases the contortions of the face are felt to be caused by pockets of foamy stuff which accumulate under the skin.

Sanapia feels that ghost and witch sickness are the most difficult types of sickness to treat because both are essentially unnatural and malevolent. In contrast, pneumonia, for example, is a natural sickness which does not possess the supernatural tenacity of illnesses which are backed by the supernatural and malevolent resolve of a ghost or witch. Thus with ghost and witch sickness, Sanapia must not only cure the symptomatic effects of these illnesses but must also act to neutralize the malevolent supernatural power which is somehow contiguous with these symptoms.

Treatment of Witch Sickness

When Sanapia doctors a victim of witchcraft, she utilizes *təpinatsu*, *ekapokowa:pi*, *kusiwɔna*, her Medicine feather, glass slivers, charcoal from the peyote drum, and her sucking horn. She prepares a thin paste of *kusiwɔna* and applies it to the area of the patient's body which she feels to be the place where the feather is located. *Təpinatsu* and *ekapokowa:pi* are deposited on live coals to produce medicine smoke which is wafted over the patient to induce healing.

The procedure begins before sunrise on the first day of treatment when Sanapia makes her morning prayers to the rising sun. She begins treatment proper when she feels all conditions to be favorable. Exactly what criteria Sanapia uses

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754 to judge when the time is right to begin treatment would be difficult to outline.
755 A good portion of such a feeling would naturally be highly personal. Some condi-
756 tions which would be negative influences on Sanapia's decision to begin treat-
787 ment might be barking dogs, the sudden appearance of visitors, an infant's crying, or a sudden change of weather. Sanapia would consider barking dogs or a sudden change of weather as negative omens. The appearance of visitors or the crying of an infant would simply be distracting to her.

754 When she initiates treatment, she first prays over the patient and fans
755 smoke produced by the *tapinatsu* and *ekapokowa:pi* over him. After her first
756 prayer, in which she calls on her powers to assist her, she takes her charcoal
[782] medicine and draws a circle around the area on the patient's body in which she feels the feather is located to prevent the feather's escape to another area of the body. Next, she makes several incisions in the area of the circle and applies a thin paste of *kusiwana* over the incisions. She then fans her medicine smoke over this area and begins her attempt to suck the feather from the patient's body.

As blood, sucked from the area of incisions, collects in her sucking horn or in her mouth, she deposits it on a white paper plate which she keeps near her. The entire procedure of cutting, applying medicine, fanning, and attempting to remove the feather by suction continues until Sanapia has removed the feather or has come to the conclusion that her powers are not sufficient to cure the patient. When and if the feather appears in the plate of blood she shows the plate to the patient, or the patient's parents, and pronounces him cured; and, after giving the patient a final blessing, the treatment is completed.

The word "appears," when used in connection with the removal of the witch's feather, must be understood in a special sense. Sanapia does not state that she removes a real feather. She reports that the Comanche words she uses when exhibiting the plate of blood to the patient after the "removal of the feather" means that the effects of the feather have been removed. She feels that the witch can project the evil potential of the plume into the body of the victim, though the feather itself is not magically injected into the vitcim. Sanapia doctors to alleviate the physical symptoms which result from the magically injected malevolent essence of the eagle plume utilized in the act of witchcraft. This notion of transmitting the essence of an object into a person was mentioned in the discussion of Sanapia's doctoring of ghost sickness. During her doctoring in the specially arranged peyote meeting, Sanapia attempted to transmit the pliable qualities of the wet drumhead to the patient's face. She also applied the stone peyote drum "bosses" to the patient's face so that, through her powers, the positive qualities of these stones—firmness and stability—could be injected into the patient's contorted face to heal him. Just as Sanapia attempted to inflict positive powers from their source to a patient, so could she use her powers to inject negative essences of an object into an individual. But what is the particular malevolent essence of an eagle plume which can be utilized to witch? As we discuss the manner in which Sanapia conceptualizes the nature and cause of human illness, the answer will present itself.

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of our store with a recessed double doorway at the front. Old Warrior and his woman would take possession of this setback, spread down the blanket they rode on, sit down and pretend they didn't see anyone passing or hear anyone who spoke to them.

Once they were seated comfortably in the setback, they would have a ritualistic smoke. Mrs. Warrior would produce a baking-powder can from the folds of her blanket, take out a dried and trimmed oak leaf, hand it to her husband, then hide the can. After wetting the leaf with his tongue, Old Warrior would rub the moisture into the leaf with his thumb and forefingers.

During the leaf-softening and limbering process, the wife brought out a sack of Bull Durham smoking tobacco. When Old Warrior decided the leaf was properly conditioned, he took the tobacco sack and carefully poured the proper amount into the curved leaf. Care was exercised not to spill a grain of the precious weed.

Rolling tobacco into a cured leaf for a smoke is an art, or at least an accomplishment. There probably never was a white boy in all Comanche land who didn't try it at least once. When the leaf was rolled, it was necessary to hold it in place with thumb and finger to keep it from unrolling again.

By the time Old Warrior finished preparing the smoke, his wife, having caused the Bull Durham sack to disappear, produced a match. This ceremonial consumed even more time than my telling. Everything was done in slow motion. Maybe slow rhythm is a truer description. The ritual continued after the leaf cigarette was lighted; the husband took a few puffs and handed the cigarette to his wife; the wife had her puffs and handed it back. This exchange continued until the cigarette was too short to hold. They made the smoke last a surprisingly long time, but they never smoked a second cigarette, regardless of how late they had to wait for their whiskey.

I saw the same ritual performed a number of times by other old couples, and I have seen old men smoke by themselves, but I have no recollection of ever seeing a Comanche woman smoke by herself or with other women. We often had as many as a dozen wives sitting in the back of the store, but none of them ever smoked.

I questioned frontier friends about the old people's smoking. They said the plains Indians never used tobacco like the white man. Tobacco to the older Comanches was never a solace or a dissipation;

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to them tobacco was a gift from the great spirit. What I had witnessed could be considered in the nature of a prayer or communion—perhaps you could apply the word *sacrament* to it.

I made a number of plans to observe these incidents more thoroughly, but none materialized. One was to count the number of puffs each took from the cigarette, and another was to find out who furnished Old Warrior his whiskey. The trouble was that I could only watch Mr. and Mrs. Old Warrior between the chores which needed to be done around the store. Late customers had to be waited upon; the team of little Spanish driving mules had to be hitched up for our trip to the claim, when we could finally close the store; occasionally there were letters to be mailed, so they would be sure to leave on the early morning mail hack for Lawton. These necessary duties made my watching a hit-and-miss activity.

Mr. and Mrs. Old Warrior's ritual extended to the drinking of whiskey. The bottle was always kept out of sight. When Old Warrior had the bottle opened, Mrs. Warrior held up part of her blanket over one arm in front of her husband, hiding him while he had his drink. When it was Mrs. Warrior's turn, he held up his blanket to shield her.

After the bottle passed back and forth a few times, the old couple headed for home. But they never left the bottle, so I assumed they kept some for the road. Their departure would leave me with a number of things to wonder about.

I wondered if they would make it home safely, if the little mare was trained to wait in case they went to sleep and fell off. If the weather was inclement, I worried about the two elderly people catching cold. Also, I wondered what their three Carlisle-educated children, two sons and a daughter, thought of their parents' late hours.

The old people's confidence in the little chubby mare was not misplaced. They survived each trip. I imagine Old Warrior and his wife felt they had been very discreet while in town, and that none of the white people had the slightest idea they had purchased whiskey.

I once heard a story at a Comanche gathering that may explain the care Old Warrior and his wife exercised when on whiskey trips. An old fellow told of having the record books of the old Deyo Mission. They had been left with his father, Ho-var-ith-kh, for safekeeping.

After telling of the formation of the first congregation, he turned to me and said laughingly, "You knew Old Warrior? Well, once Old

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girl. When told how seriously ill she was, he asked if he could come in and pray for her. The parents consented. The child was in a coma, and it would not disturb her. The prayer was long and, of course, in his native tongue.

I am sure there was no doubt in his mind but that God understood Comanche. When he arose, there were tears in his eyes. He assured the worried parents their daughter would live. Wiping the tears from his eyes, he went out, untied his team, and drove away toward home.

These are some episodes I tell over in my mind, recalling Wer-que-yah, bringing his picture before me clearly. They are the bold brush strokes. Then they, in turn, bring many tiny details to mind as I continue to think of him.

There are friendly smiles; quick, firm handclasps; an arm held high, waving me to leave the trail and ride by his home, where, smiling, he shows me his excellent field glasses. He has seen me afar off and has waited to wave. These are the fine brush strokes that fill in the background of my picture of Wer-que-yah, Jesus-Man Comanche.

Comanche NM6
Delaware NM7

| Element | Occurrence | | |